

Washington, D.C. -- The House of Representatives late last month approved legislation providing funding for several environmental projects in the Portland Metropolitan area, including restoration of Johnson Creek and stabilization of the St. John's landfill. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) requested congressional support for the projects earlier this year.

"I'm pleased that Congress approved these funds which will protect and restore water quality and fish habitat in the Portland Metropolitan area," said Blumenauer.

The Johnson Creek project, funded at \$220,000, will implement a series of restoration projects designed to address impaired water quality and natural resource functions of Johnson Creek within the Springwater Industrial Area. The project is within an area slated for industrial development in the near term and will help leverage private development by addressing important stream corridor needs. The project will restore wetlands and riparian areas, enhance water quality, and improve off-channel habitat for salmon. It is supported by the City of Gresham, the Johnson Creek Watershed Council and the Department of Environmental Quality.

"Restoring the health of Johnson Creek is of primary importance to the citizens of Gresham and the Springwater Community will help us do just that," said Gresham Mayor Chuck Becker. "We are very grateful to the Congress for this support and look forward to working with the Corps and other citizen groups to develop and implement a plan that will bring back the abundance of salmon population to our region."

The legislation also includes \$500,000 to stabilize a dike at St. Johns Landfill, located in a sensitive wetland in North Portland. The landfill accepted municipal and industrial waste for over half a century until 1991. The waste included substances now regulated as hazardous waste, and sound management of this landfill is a regional priority. Surface water is eating away at the perimeter dike around St. Johns landfill, which is the only barrier between the waste and the Columbia Slough. A future landslide could cause buried waste and contaminated liquid to fall into the Slough. Funding will be used for completion of planning and design, and for construction to carry out repairs to stabilize the dike.

"We want to thank Congressman Blumenauer for his advocacy for this region," said Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, who represents the district in which the St. John's landfill is located. "It takes continual vigilance and maintenance to make sure we keep waste in the St Johns Landfill and out of our rivers and streams. These funds are critical for protecting our health and habitat and for keeping nature in neighborhoods."

Also included in the legislation was \$436,000 for a floodplain restoration feasibility study for the Willamette River, funding for habitat restoration on the Lower Columbia Estuary, \$15 million for the Columbia River Channel Deepening Project and \$10.186 million for repairs to jetties located at the mouth of the Columbia River.

The funding for these projects was included in the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, legislation funding the Army Corps of Engineers for the coming year. The legislation, passed by the House on May 24th, must now be approved by the United States Senate.